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DDI-2703-68

3 October 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Basic and
Geographic Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comprehensive Review of
the NIS Program

1. The number and variety of questions concerning the NIS Program have increased over the past year. We have had questions about the external contracting aspects of the Program, ✓ about the costs and scheduling of printing, and even about the ✓ usefulness of the NIS publications. These queries have come from a wide variety of sources: Congress, the Bureau of the Budget, the Executive Director, etc. Although we have handled most of these inquiries, the time available for response usually was not sufficient for thorough staffing. In addition, the NIS Committee itself initiated a complete review of its production program and formulated a new schedule for production for the next five years. Because of the fragmentary nature of these actions, it seems appropriate for us to produce a comprehensive, detailed, and consistent paper covering all the important aspects of the NIS Program.

2. Most of the inquiries reflect a lack of understanding of the role and usefulness of the publications produced under the Program. Obviously, this is a fundamental consideration and should serve as the point of departure for determining the course of action on all other aspects of the Program. In this respect, the Executive Director-Comptroller has requested a new survey of the users of the NIS, including the Departments of State and Defense. The attachment to this memorandum indicates the types of questions that should be included in such a survey. Answers to these questions would provide much of the material necessary for describing the role and usefulness of the NIS product ✓ and for reassessing the validity of the concept of contingency intelligence.

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Attachment to NIS Memo

NIS CONSUMER SURVEY

The survey should include questions to NIS users covering the following points (questions below are not meant to be inclusive but only indicative):

Usefulness:

1. What types of situations require the use of the NIS?
2. What is the frequency of use?
3. What is the value of the NIS material?

Alternatives:

1. Is the NIS a primary or secondary source?
2. What are the advantages or disadvantages of the NIS as compared to the alternative sources?

Updating Cycle:

1. How rapidly does the usefulness of the NIS decline?
2. Should the NIS be updated more frequently or less frequently?

Updating System:

Could the updating system be simplified without significant loss of value (e.g., by providing a pocket inside cover for insertion of change sheets or by publishing loose leaf so that changes can be easily inserted)?

Format and Coverage:

1. Is there a simpler format which would meet user needs (more tables with less text, fewer graphics)?
2. Could user needs be met with less detailed coverage?

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3. The substantive coverage and the rate of obsolescence of NIS volumes should also be reassessed in this paper. What is needed is a complete review and exposition of the specific subjects by geographic areas to determine the scope of coverage and the frequency of revision appropriate to the needs. ✓

4. The basic concept for the allocation of substantive responsibility for production should also be examined to determine whether arrangements made long ago are still valid. At a minimum, the concept should be described fully; in addition, any useful changes should be recommended and justified.

5. There is little doubt that the quality of the printing of NIS publications is the highest in the intelligence community. The basic question is, however, whether so high a quality is necessary. A recent study of the Agency's printing services shows that more than a quarter of the PSD budget is devoted to the NIS Program. It also shows that the average cost per NIS page is about eleven cents; this is about six times the cost of other finished intelligence. Obviously, the objective here is to determine whether some decrease in quality would save substantial printing costs. ✓

6. On this basis, I request that you study the NIS Program and prepare a comprehensive report on the topics discussed above as well as any others you think appropriate. This paper should also discuss fully the cost effects of any changes which might be recommended. Equally important is the need for the explicit presentation of the concepts and considerations basic to the Program. In this respect, the objective is to present in one document a full explanation of all aspects of the Program that can stand for several years. After you have had sufficient time to consider this request, we can discuss it and agree on an appropriate completion date. 25X1A9a


EDWARD W. PROCTOR
Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachment:
NIS Consumer Survey

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